

Eating and Drinking Places

(SIC 58)

SIGNIFICANT POINTS

- Eating and drinking places provide many young people with their first jobs—in 1998, 25 percent of all workers in these establishments were age 16-19, five times the average for all industries.
- Cooks, waiters and waitresses, and other service workers over 3 out of 4 jobs.
- Half of all employees work part-time, more than double the overall average.
- Job opportunities will be plentiful because turnover is high, little or no formal education or previous training is required, and earnings are low.

Nature of the Industry

So fundamental are the services provided by the eating and drinking places industry, that it may be the world's oldest industry. It may also be the world's most widespread and familiar one. In the United States, this industry comprises about 479,000 places of employment in large cities, small towns, and rural areas. These establishments include all types of restaurants, from fast-food to elegant and expensive. They also include drinking places—establishments which primarily sell alcoholic beverages for consumption on the premises.

Restaurants make up the majority of establishments in this industry. The most common is a franchised operation of a nationwide restaurant chain that sells fast food. According to the National Restaurant Association, the fast-food component accounted for more than 1 out of every 3 eating and drinking places in 1998; these establishments have grown steadily from less than 20 percent of the industry in 1970. These restaurants are characterized by their limited menu, lack of waiters and waitresses, and emphasis on self-service. Menu selections usually are prepared by workers with limited cooking skills. Since the food typically is served in disposable, take-out containers that retain the food's warmth, it often is prepared prior to a customer's request. A growing number of fast-food restaurants are providing drive-through and delivery services.

Full-service restaurants, in contrast, offer broader menus with a variety of choices, including appetizers, entrees, salads, side dishes, desserts, and beverages. Waiters and waitresses usually serve meals at a leisurely pace, in comfortable surroundings. Although the number of full-service restaurants that are part of national chains is growing, the typical restaurant is independently owned and locally operated.

Cafeterias open to the general public and those operated under contract by commercial food service companies comprise another major segment of this industry. Like fast-food restaurants, cafeteria menus usually offer a somewhat limited selection, which varies from day to day. Yet like full-service restaurants, their selections may require more culinary skills to prepare. Selections usually are prepared ahead in large quantities and seldom cooked to the customer's order.

Drinking places comprise less than 11 percent of all establishments in this industry. Although considered drinking places, some bars and nightclubs offer patrons limited dining services in addition to alcoholic beverages. In some States,

they also sell packaged alcoholic beverages for consumption off the premises. Establishments selling alcoholic beverages are closely regulated by State and local alcoholic beverage control authorities.

Finally, the eating and drinking places industry includes a wide variety of specialized businesses, such as catering firms, concession stands at sports events, ice cream stores, and even dinner theaters.

Working Conditions

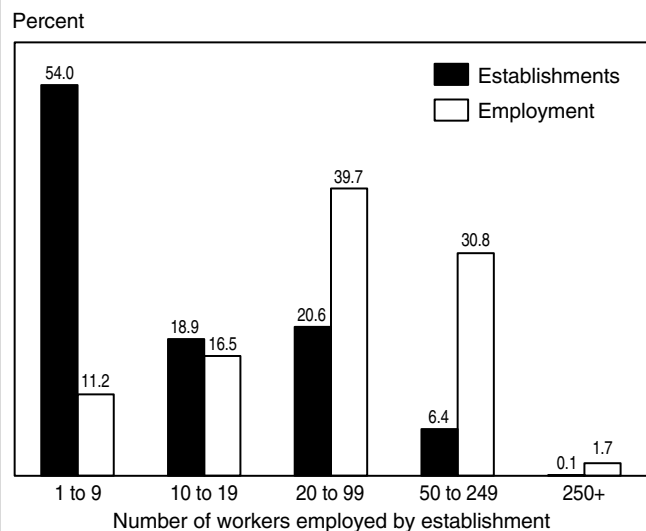
Jobs in eating and drinking places are far more likely to be part-time than those in other industries; about 38 percent of the workers in eating and drinking establishments worked fewer than 35 hours a week in 1998, compared to 15.9 percent in the work force as a whole. Full-time employees often are on the job during evenings, weekends, and holidays. Some employees are required to work split shifts—they work for several hours during one busy period, are off duty for a few hours, and then go back to work during the next busy period. Some employees work rotating shifts on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis.

Although many eating and drinking places have well-designed kitchens and dining areas with state-of-the-art equipment, kitchens usually are noisy, and very hot near stoves, grills, ovens, or steam tables. Dining areas also are noisy when customers are present and servers are waiting on patrons.

Workers directly involved in food preparation and services spend most of their time on their feet. Upper body strength often is needed to lift heavy items, such as trays of dishes or cooking pots. Work during peak dining hours can be very hectic and stressful.

Employees who have direct contact with customers should have a professional and pleasant manner, which may be difficult to maintain over the course of a long shift. Excellent food that is poorly served can result in the failure of a restaurant, while average food served in an outstanding manner often results in success. Therefore, professional hospitality is required from the moment guests enter to the time they leave. According to the American Culinary Institute, a major reason why guests stop patronizing a restaurant is employee indifference to guest service. The average displeased guest will tell 8 to 16 people and 91 percent of unhappy guests will never return.

Over half of all eating and drinking establishments employ fewer than 10 people



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, *County Business Patterns*, 1997

In 1997, the rate of work-related injuries and illnesses was 6.5 per 100 full-time workers in eating and drinking places, slightly less than the average of 7.1 for the private sector. Work hazards include the possibility of burns from hot equipment, sprained muscles, and wrenched backs from heavy lifting and falls on slippery floors.

Employment

The eating and drinking places industry, with about 7.8 million jobs in 1998, ranks among the Nation's leading employers. Only the educational services and health services industries provide more jobs. Eating and drinking places tend to be small; about 54 percent of the establishments in the industry employ fewer than 10 paid workers (chart). As a result, this industry often is considered attractive to individuals who desire to own and run their own businesses. An estimated 267,000 self-employed people worked in the industry, representing about 3 percent of total employment.

This industry, particularly fast-food establishments, is a leading employer of teenagers—ages 16 through 19—providing first jobs for many new entrants to the labor force. In 1998, nearly 25 percent of all workers in eating and drinking places were teenagers, five times the proportion in all industries (table 1). Almost 45 percent were under age 25, triple the proportion in all industries.

Table 1. Percent distribution of employment in eating and drinking places by age group, 1998

Age group	Eating and drinking places	All industries
Total	100.0	100.0
16-19	24.7	5.4
20-24	19.4	9.5
25-34	23.7	23.8
35-44	17.4	27.5
45-54	9.0	21.0
55-64	4.1	9.8
65 and older	1.6	2.9

Occupations in the Industry

Workers in this industry perform a variety of tasks. They prepare menu items, keep food preparation and service areas clean, wait on and take payment from customers, and provide support services to the establishment. Cooks, waiters and waitresses, and other food preparation and service workers comprise over 3 out of 4 jobs (table 2).

Employees in the various food service occupations deal with customers in a dining area or at a service counter. *Waiters* and *waitresses* take customers' orders, serve food and beverages, and prepare itemized checks. In finer restaurants, they may describe chef's specials and suggest wines. In some establishments, they escort customers to their seats, accept payments, and set up and clear tables. In many larger restaurants, however, these tasks are assigned to other workers.

Table 2. Employment of wage and salary workers in eating and drinking places by occupation, 1998 and projected change, 1998-2008

(Employment in thousands)

Occupation	1998 Employment Number	Percent	1998-2008 Percent change
All occupations	7,760	100.0	17.0
Service	6,423	82.8	15.6
Waiters and waitresses	1,677	21.6	19.4
Food counter, fountain, and related workers	1,576	20.3	10.8
Cooks, restaurant	630	8.1	20.7
Food preparation workers	611	7.9	10.8
Cooks, short order and fast food ...	610	7.9	18.6
Bartenders	270	3.5	-1.5
Dining room and cafeteria attendants and bartenders' helpers	249	3.2	-1.5
Hosts and hostesses, restaurant, lounge, or coffee shop	217	2.8	19.4
Janitors and cleaners	117	1.5	10.8
Cooks, institutional or cafeteria	52	0.7	23.1
Bakers, bread and pastry	41	0.5	23.1
Marketing and sales	521	6.7	31.1
Cashiers	455	5.9	32.8
Executive, administrative, and managerial	450	5.8	19.8
Food service and lodging managers	268	3.5	20.2
General managers and top executives	151	2.0	19.5
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	172	2.2	17.6
Driver/sales workers	74	1.0	10.8
Administrative support, including clerical	126	1.6	19.0
All other occupations	68	0.9	25.8

Other food service occupations include *hosts* and *hostesses*, who welcome customers, show them to their tables, and give them menus. *Bartenders* fill drink orders for waiters and waitresses and orders from customers seated at the bar. *Dining room attendants* and *bartender helpers* assist waiters, waitresses, and bartenders by clearing, cleaning, and setting up tables, as well as keeping service areas stocked with supplies. *Counter attendants* take orders and serve food at counters,

cafeteria steam tables, and fast-food counters. Depending on the size and type of establishment, attendants may also operate the cash register.

Workers in the various *food preparation occupations* prepare food in the kitchen. *Institutional cooks* work in the kitchens of schools, hospitals, industrial cafeterias, and other institutions, where they prepare large quantities of a small variety of menu items. *Restaurant cooks* and *chefs* usually prepare a wider selection of dishes for each meal, cooking individual servings to order. *Bread* and *pastry bakers* typically produce small quantities of baked goods for sale or use in the establishment. *Short-order cooks* prepare grilled items and sandwiches in establishments that emphasize fast service. *Specialty fast-food cooks* prepare a limited selection of items in fast-food restaurants, cooking and packaging batches of food that are either prepared to order or kept warm until sold. *Food preparation workers* shred lettuce for salads, cut up food, keep work areas clean, and perform simple cooking tasks under the direction of the chef or head cook. *Dishwashers* clean dishes, glasses, and kitchen accessories by hand or machine.

Managers hire, train, supervise, and discharge these workers in eating and drinking establishments. They also purchase supplies, deal with vendors, keep records, and help whenever an extra worker is needed in the kitchen or dining room. The *executive chef* oversees the kitchen, selects the menu, instructs the food preparation workers, and directs the preparation of food. In fine dining establishments, the *maitre'd* serves as host or hostess while overseeing the dining room. Larger establishments may employ a *general manager*, as well as a number of assistant managers. Many managers are part-owners of the establishments they manage.

Eating and drinking places employ a wide range of other workers, including accountants, advertising and public relations workers, bookkeepers, dietitians, mechanics and other maintenance workers, musicians and other entertainers, personnel workers, and various clerks.

Training and Advancement

Although the skills and experience required by workers in eating and drinking places differ by occupation, many entry-level positions, such as waiter and waitress or food preparation worker, require little or no formal education or previous training. These jobs are most commonly held by young workers; for many, this is their first job. On-the-job training, typically under the close supervision of an experienced employee or manager, often lasts less than a week. Some large chain operations require formal training sessions for new employees and may use video training programs.

Formal training of managers is common. As more restaurants use computers to keep track of sales and inventory, computer training is becoming increasingly integrated into management training programs. In smaller, independent restaurants, assistant managers learn their duties on the job, while most chain-affiliated establishments provide formal programs that introduce new managers to company procedures. Increasingly, establishments use video and satellite TV training programs to educate newly hired staff about quality and daily operational standards. Nationwide restaurant chains often operate their own schools for managers,

where people nominated for assistant manager jobs attend training seminars before acquiring additional responsibilities. Eventually, they may advance to general manager of one of the chain's establishments, or even a top management position in a large chain operation.

Completion of postsecondary training in culinary arts, restaurant and food service management, or a related field is increasingly important for advancement in the eating and drinking places industry. Completion of such a program often enables graduates to start as trainee chefs or assistant managers. Management programs last from 18 months to 4 years; upon completion, a bachelor's degree is awarded. Programs are available through junior and community colleges, 4-year colleges and universities, trade schools, hotel or restaurant associations, and trade unions. The Armed Forces are another source of training and experience in food service work.

Training for chefs has changed radically in the past 10 years, as chefs assume greater leadership and managerial roles in the industry. Today most culinary programs offer more business courses along with computer training to better prepare chefs to manage a large operation.

Promotion opportunities in eating and drinking places vary by occupation and the size of individual establishments. Similar to other industries, larger establishments and organizations usually offer better advancement opportunities. As beginners gain experience and basic skills, those who choose to pursue careers in eating and drinking places transfer to other jobs that require greater skill and offer higher earnings. Many workers earn progressively larger incomes as they gain experience by switching to jobs in other establishments offering higher compensation or requiring greater service skills and managerial responsibilities. For example, waiters and waitresses may transfer to jobs in more expensive or busier restaurants that offer higher tips.

Advancement opportunities are better for food preparation workers, particularly for those who work in full-service restaurants. Starting as unskilled food preparation workers, some advance to cook jobs as they pick up skills in the kitchen, and from those jobs to more challenging chef positions. As chefs improve their culinary skills, their opportunities for professional recognition and higher earnings improve.

Many managers of eating and drinking places obtain their positions through hard work and experience. Chefs often advance to executive chef positions, and food service workers often are promoted to *maitre'd* or other managerial jobs. Many managers of fast-food restaurants have advanced from the ranks of hourly workers. Managers with access to the necessary capital may even open their own eating and drinking places.

Earnings

Earnings in eating and drinking places usually are much lower than the average for all industries (table 3). These low earnings are supplemented for many workers, however, by tips from customers. Waiters, waitresses, and bartenders, for example, often derive the majority of their earnings from tips, which depend on menu prices and the volume of customers served. In some establishments, workers who receive tips share a portion of their gratuities with other workers in the dining room and kitchen.

Table 3. Average earnings of nonsupervisory workers in eating and drinking places, 1998¹

Industry segment	Weekly	Hourly
All private industry	\$442	\$12.77
Eating and drinking places	162	6.35

¹ Money payments only; tips not included.

Workers' earnings vary by occupation and by location, type, and size of the establishment. Usually, skilled workers, such as chefs, have the highest wages, and workers who receive tips, the lowest. Many workers in the industry earn the Federal minimum wage of \$5.15 an hour or less, if tips are included as a substantial part of earnings. A number of employers provide free or discounted meals and uniforms to full- and part-time employees. Earnings in the largest occupations employed in eating and drinking places appear in table 4.

Table 4. Median hourly earnings of the largest occupations in eating and drinking places, 1997

Occupation	Eating and drinking places	All industries
Food service and lodging managers	\$12.01	\$12.18
Cooks, restaurant	7.39	7.54
Hosts or hostesses, restaurant, lounge, or coffee shop	5.98	6.11
Food preparation workers	5.88	6.42
Bartenders	5.84	5.94
Cashiers	5.71	6.22
Combined food preparation and service workers	5.69	5.72
Cooks, fast food	5.69	5.70
Dining room and cafeteria attendants and bartender helpers	5.63	5.73
Waiters and waitresses	5.57	5.59

Unionization is not widespread in the eating and drinking places industry. Only 1.6 percent of all employees are union members or are covered by union contracts, compared to 15.4 percent for all industries.

Outlook

Job opportunities in eating and drinking places should be plentiful. Wage and salary jobs in eating and drinking places are expected to increase by 17 percent over the 1998-2008 period, somewhat faster than the 15 percent growth projected for all industries combined. In addition to employment growth, vast numbers of job openings will stem from replacement needs in this large industry, as experienced workers find other jobs or stop working. This high job turnover reflects the large number of young, part-time workers in this industry. Thus, numerous jobs will be available for people

with limited job skills, first-time job seekers, senior citizens, and those seeking part-time work.

Increases in population, personal incomes, leisure time, and dual-income families will contribute to job growth. With a growing proportion of the population concentrated in the older age groups, moderately-priced restaurants offering table service that appeal to families should be the fastest growing segment of the eating and drinking places industry; fine dining establishments, which appeal to affluent, often older, customers, should grow as the 45-and-older population increases rapidly. Limited-service and fast-food restaurants that appeal to younger diners should increase more slowly than in the past. Contracting out of institutional food services in schools, hospitals, and company cafeterias should shift jobs to firms specializing in these services. Also, an aging population should increase the demand for managerial and food service workers in nursing homes and assisted-living facilities through the year 2008. Some of the increased demand for food services will be met through more self-service facilities such as salad bars, untended meal stations, and automated beverage stations.

Occupational projections reflect different rates of growth among the various segments of the eating and drinking places industry (table 2). For example, rapid job growth is projected for skilled cooks and chefs, while relatively slow growth is projected for unskilled food preparation workers and food counter, fountain, and related workers. Those who qualify—either through experience or formal culinary training—for skilled cook, chef, and baker positions should be in demand. The number of bartender jobs is expected to decline as the consumption of alcoholic beverages outside the home continues to decline in volume and people shift from mixed drinks to beer and wine. The greatest number of job openings will be in the largest occupations—waiters and waitresses, and food counter, fountain, and related workers.

Employment of salaried managers is projected to grow as a result of rapid growth of chain and franchised establishments. Graduates of college hospitality programs should have especially good opportunities, particularly those with good computer skills who can design spreadsheets. The growing dominance of chain-affiliated eating and drinking places should also enhance managers' opportunities for advancement into general manager positions and corporate administrative jobs. Employment of self-employed managers of independent eating and drinking places is expected to increase more slowly.

Sources of Additional Information

For additional information about careers and training in the eating and drinking places industry, write to:

- National Restaurant Association, 1200 17th St. NW., Washington, DC 20036.
- The American Culinary Federation, P.O. Box 3466, St. Augustine, FL 32085.

For a list of educational programs in the eating and drinking industry, write to:

- Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education, 1200 17th St. NW., Washington, DC 20036-3097.

Information on vocational education courses for food preparation and service careers may be obtained from your State or local director of vocational education or superintendent of schools.

Information on these, and other occupations, found in eating and drinking places appears in the 2000-01 *Occupational Outlook Handbook*:

- Cashiers
- Chefs, cooks, and other kitchen workers
- Food and beverage service occupations
- Restaurant and food service managers